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A

CITIZEN'S APPEAL

IN REGARD TO THE

WAR WITH MEXICO.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT LYCEUM HALL, LYNN,

JANUARY 16, 1848,

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BY CHARLES C. SHACKFORD.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY ANDREWS & PRENTISS,

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## LECTURE.

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I TAKE as the subject of my Lecture the "War with Mexico," because it is, at present, the subject which should engage our attention. It is *the question* of our country, in which its prosperity is most concerned. And I take it, moreover, because there is a disposition very generally manifest, to leave this subject exclusively to professed politicians, when these politicians themselves take their tone from the people, and are but the echoes of public sentiment.

Hence it would be to lose all moral influence, for us to be quiet and silent, leaving to them the exclusive consideration of this great question. God be thanked, that there is yet left some little appearance of freedom, and that our public affairs have not yet fallen to the absolute disposal of a few, with no opportunity for the rest to send forth remonstrance and rebuke. If, then, it be true that office-holders are not our masters, but rather the servants of public opinion; if they are but the hands to execute our work, and the mouth-pieces to express our thoughts, it belongs to each one to let his thought and work be known. Each one is to take heed that he shall do something towards giving a high, pure, and Christian tone to the opinion of that circle,

however small it may be, in which he moves ; so that, finally, all the many streamlets shall converge to one centre, and thus shall fertilize and bless the whole country.

It sometimes happens in the private history of an individual, that when he begins to congratulate himself upon his exalted state, the ground shakes beneath him, and he falls an easy victim to some sin or passion, which he thought he had escaped. The mist envelops him, and shuts out the sunlight. And so it is with a people. We, to-day, exemplify the fact in our own history. We, who have boasted so much of the wisdom and philanthropy of our times, who began to speak of war as the relic of barbarous ages, and flattered ourselves that we were removed from the dangers of foreign war, despotic armies, and a resort to sword and cannon ; we, who hoped that the reign of force, and the day of the bloody warrior, was well nigh over ; that the peaceful kingdom of industry, science, arts, schools, commerce, justice, and love had begun to dawn, and would speedily culminate into the full brightness of noon ; who were nurtured in abhorrence of foreign war, and thought we had opened a fairer career of progress than any of the old nations, weakened and worn out by their very conquests ; we, who looked upon a national war as an impossibility, have had our pleasing dream dispelled. The shadows are about us, and a dense cloud envelopes every object.

We are engaged in a war of conquest. All the resources of our nation for to-day and many days to come, are applied to inflict the horrors of war upon a neighboring people. We are recorded in the book of history, as the murderers of thousands whose only

crime was living upon their native soil. We have sent thousands of our brethren to die by the sword and pestilence, to stain their hands in blood, to be trained in the school of abject slavery, to stifle conscience and the thought of better things, to forget their humanity and the sweet influences of a mother's prayer, to learn the trade of vengeance and destruction. We have caused to ascend the orphan's cry and the widow's wail. We have sacked cities, overturned the pursuits of peace, and used our wealth, science, means and men, for war upon a foreign soil.

Truly is this matter *the* question of to-day ; and the question not of politicians merely, but of every individual who has heart, or thought, or conscience. It is a question which should torment each one of us, until it is answered, how we shall do our part towards right and justice ; how, whatever evils may befall, we may feel that our consciences are free from blame. Not yet in our country are the governed one caste, and the governors another. While therefore we are all interested, we are all responsible. In the name of the people, of which we are a part, is this war waged. To the extent, therefore, of our acquiescence by silence, by indifference, by a let-alone-policy, are we really guilty.

About twelve years ago, when the idea of the annexation of Texas to the United States was derided by men of all parties, as would be the idea of the annexation of Botany Bay,—when the Politicians were asleep and saw no signs of the approaching evil,—there proceeded from one who was regarded by them as a mere Dreamer and Theorist, and was directed to stick to his trade of preaching from the pulpit, a word which was a voice of prophecy, so literally has it been

fulfilled. At that time Dr. Channing wrote his letter to Henry Clay "On the Annexation of Texas to the United States," a letter which, like the warning of all prophets, fell upon deaf and incredulous ears. In this letter he says, "By this act, our country will enter on a career of encroachment, war, and crime, and will merit and incur the punishment and woe of wrongdoing. *The seizure of Texas will not stand alone. It will darken our future history. It will be linked by an iron necessity to long continued deeds of rapine and blood. Texas is a country conquered by our citizens; and the annexation of it to our Union, will be the beginning of conquests, which unless arrested and beaten back by a just and kind Providence, will stop only at the Isthmus of Darien. Henceforth, we must cease to cry, peace, peace. Our Eagle will whet, not gorge its appetite on its first victim; and will snuff a more tempting quarry, more alluring blood, in every new region which opens southward. To annex Texas is to declare perpetual war with Mexico. Texas is the first step to Mexico. The moment we plant our authority on Texas, the boundaries of these two countries will become nominal, will be little more than lines on the sand of the sea-shore. Can Mexico look without alarm on the approaches of this ever-growing tide? Is she prepared to be a passive prey? to shrink and surrender without a struggle? Is she not strong in her hatred, if not in her fortresses and skill? Strong enough to make war a dear and bloody game?* Even were the dispositions of our government most pacific and opposed to encroachment, the annexation of Texas would almost certainly embroil us with Mexico. Have we counted the cost of establishing and making perpetual these hostile relations



with Mexico? Will wars, begun in rapacity, carried on so far from the centre of the confederation, and of consequence, *little checked or controlled by Congress*, add strength to our institutions, or cement our union, or exert a healthy moral influence on rulers or people? What limits can be set to the atrocities of such conflicts? What limits to the treasures which must be lavished on such distant borders? What limits to the *patronage and power, which such distant expeditions must accumulate in the hands of the Executive?* Are the blood and hard-earned wealth of the older States to be poured out like water, to protect and revenge a new people, whose character and condition will plunge them into perpetual wrongs?"

These words have now become historical Fact. They contain the whole explanation of the war in which we are now engaged. They were based on a knowledge of the essential principles of human nature, a keen perception of the realities of national character, and proceeded from one who wrote free from the bias of party and political ambition, whose finer instincts were alive to the influences at work in the moral world of causes.

But no one believed in the necessity of the warning. One year passed after another, and the advocates of this measure were pursuing their work, operating stealthily and steadily. No party dared to advocate the measure of Annexation. As is well known, our Massachusetts Legislature in 1843 protested against it in the strongest terms, and both Whigs and Democrats united in the protest. The Cabinet of Van Buren, when Texas first applied in 1837, to be admitted into the Union, were unanimous in rejecting the proposal. Mr. Forsyth, the Secretary of State, thus replied:

“So long as Texas shall remain at war, while the United States are at peace with her adversary, the proposition of the Texan Minister Plenipotentiary, *necessarily involves the question of war with that adversary.*” And, again, in 1844, Mr. Van Buren wrote, “If, as *sensible* men, we cannot avoid the conclusion, that the immediate annexation of Texas would draw after it a war with Mexico, can it be expedient to attempt it? Could we hope to stand justified in the eyes of mankind for entering into such a war? More especially, if its commencement is to be preceded by *the appropriation to our own uses of the territory, the sovereignty of which is in dispute between two nations*, one of which we are to join in the struggle?” And Henry Clay wrote at the same time, “*Annexation and war with Mexico are identical.*” And a large meeting at New York, composed of men of both parties, at the same time, unanimously adopted the following resolution, reported by a prominent Democrat:

“*Resolved*, That the Annexation of Texas to this Union, as now contemplated, would, *according to the acknowledged laws of nations*, be a positive declaration of war against Mexico, a war of conquest and an unjust war, in which this nation would be supported by no sense of right, and be condemned by the unanimous voice of the civilized and Christian world.”

What else *could* be made of it? Mexico was at war with Texas. We had an existing treaty with Mexico, then in full force, which stipulated, “that there should be a firm, inviolable, and universal peace, and a *true and sincere friendship* between the United States of America and the United Mexican States, in all the extent of their possessions.” Now what can



be said of the measure of incorporating, as a part of our territory, and thus adopting all her quarrels, a nation with which Mexico was at war, and which she claimed the right at any moment of invading. What if the Canadas had become separated from Great Britain, and we had thus incorporated the territory into our own? According to the law of nations, would not war have been inevitable with Great Britain? Would this deed, think you, have been dared? What if South Carolina had carried out her plan of nullification, had thrown off all connexion with the United States, and war having followed, England had entered even into alliance with that State; would not England have expected to go to war with our country, also?

It is, indeed, too plain a point to be argued; and so Gen. Houston thought; for he says very coolly in Congress, when the Senate was deliberating, May, 1845, on the war message: "It is now too late to deliberate. Texas and Mexico have been long at war, and the United States became *a party to that war*, in consenting to annexation." Why, Gen. Jackson, in 1836, even in regard to the minor point of acknowledging the Independence of Texas, says: "The acknowledgment of a new State as independent, is at all times an act of great delicacy and responsibility; but more especially so, when such a State has forcibly separated itself from another, which still claims dominion over it. A premature recognition, under these circumstances, if not looked upon as justifiable cause of war, is always liable to be looked upon as *proof of an unfriendly spirit* to one of the contending parties."

But time passed on. The slave-power, headstrong, blind to all rights where its own prosperity was concerned, used to trample upon the rights of man,

nursed in oppression and force, this power was at work, and resolved upon annexation in spite of all danger, the law of nations, treaties, and protests. A new slave-market must be opened. Texas must be secured to us forever from becoming an independent, free State, or "our domestic institution" will be very short-lived. Mr. Upshur said in 1839, in the Virginia Convention, "If it should be our lot to acquire Texas, the price of slaves will rise." And when it was feared that Texas would abolish slavery, the Secretary of State, the same Mr. Upshur, in 1843, wrote to our Minister in Texas, "That the establishment in the very midst of our slaveholding States of an independent government forbidding the existence of slavery, could not fail to produce the most unhappy effects. There could not be *any security for that species of property.*" And in 1844, he wrote to our Minister in England, "If Texas should not be attached to the United States, we cannot maintain that institution ten years."

And so the slavery interest labored with dogged perseverance, caring little for reproach or opposition. Its work was aided by the cunning Texans, who played upon the fears, hopes, and ambition of the imbecile Tyler, — now talking of abolition, now of a union with England, all of which has been since confessed, by those most interested, to have been the veriest humbug and pretence. And when the treaty of Annexation with Texas was finally concluded, Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of State, had the sublime audacity to write to Mr. Packenham, the British Minister, that "it was made necessary, in order to preserve *domestic institutions*, and deemed *essential to their safety and prosperity.*" After this treaty was re-

jected by the Senate, as is well known, Texas was admitted by a "Joint Resolution," which passed the House on the 16th December, and the Senate on the 22d December, 1845. She was admitted with a constitution sufficiently *republican* and *just*, to satisfy the most bigoted slave-driver of South Carolina. It provided that "all persons of color who were slaves for life, should remain in the like state of servitude, and that Congress should pass no laws to prohibit emigrants from the United States of America, from bringing their slaves into the republic with them; that Congress should have no power to emancipate slaves, and that no slaveholder should be allowed to emancipate his or her slaves; and that no free person of African descent should be permitted to reside permanently in the republic." Such was the precious jewel which we took from Mexico. But in saying this I wrong Mexico herself, for while Texas was a province of Mexico, according to her laws, the slave who trode upon the soil became a freeman. These shining beauties of the jewel were brought out as preparatory measures, to fit her for joining our free and glorious Union.

What now, on the consummation of this measure, could Mexico do? Could it not have been suffered, that after all her wrongs, and the contempt which had been put upon her threats and complaints; after the unjust appropriation, by a professed friend and ally, of the territory for which she was at war; after thus humiliating her pride, and setting at nought her entire national existence; could it not have been suffered, that she should manifest some sense of injury, and make some exhibition of wounded honor? What could the Mexican Minister do but demand his pass-

ports and return to his government? What could Mexico do, but break off all diplomatic intercourse? Mexico, according to the received laws of nations, would have been justified at once in proceeding to war; for she formally announced to our government that she would regard the measure of Annexation as *a declaration of war*.

But Mexico was weak, distracted, powerless to contend, and therefore a little harmless blustering should at least have been permitted, to assuage her irritation. She did not give way even to this. She preserved her dignity in the midst of her most burning desire of vengeance. When the Consul of the United States was directed by the President, to ascertain from the Mexican government, whether it would receive an Envoy intrusted with full powers to adjust all the questions in dispute between the two governments, the Minister of Foreign Relations, Peña y Peña, replied, "That although the Mexican nation was deeply injured by the United States, his government was disposed to receive the Commissioner of the United States, who might come with full powers from his government, to *settle the present dispute* in a peaceful, reasonable, and honorable manner."

Here was an opportunity for our government, if it had been inclined to peace, to have commenced the settlement of the existing difficulties. But instead of sending a Commissioner, such as Mexico agreed to receive, our government sent a man of no national reputation, a mere hack politician, without dignity, and without the requisite qualifications to act in such an emergency — John Slidell of Louisiana — as *Minister Plenipotentiary, to reside near the government of Mexico*. This was a direct and palpable insult to Mexico.



It supposed that the governments were on an entirely friendly footing. It ignored all causes of complaint and injury, and, as might have been anticipated, the popular feeling in Mexico would not allow the minister to be received.

The Mexican minister replied to Mr. Slidell's request to be accredited as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, that "the supreme government of Mexico cannot admit his excellency, Mr. Slidell, to the exercise of the functions of the mission conferred on him by the United States government, but that he will have the utmost pleasure in treating with Mr. Slidell, as soon as he shall have presented credentials, authorizing him *expressly* and *exclusively* to settle the questions which have disturbed the harmony and good understanding between the two republics, and which will bring on war between them, unless such settlement be effected in a satisfactory manner." Why did not our government, if it had been really desirous of peace, recall its Minister, and send such a Commissioner as Mexico desired? But so far from doing this, it anticipated, and seemed to welcome this rejection. Secretary Buchanan writes to Mr. Slidell in March, 1846, that in the event of the refusal of the Mexican government to receive him in the capacity of Resident Minister, he is "so to conduct himself, as to throw the whole odium of the failure of the negotiation upon the Mexican government. In the meantime, in anticipation of the final refusal of the Mexican government to receive you, the President has ordered the army of Texas to advance and take position on the left bank of the Rio Grande, and has directed that a strong fleet shall be assembled in the Gulf of Mexico."

Mistaking entirely the temper of the Mexican government, which wanted only some little sop to its wounded pride, and to gain time, by delay, for the passions and prejudices of the people to subside, the blundering Slidell writes home to the Secretary of State, "that the Mexican people must be convinced, by *hostile* demonstrations, that our differences must be settled promptly." And accordingly on the 13th of January, 1846, General Taylor was ordered to advance to the Rio Grande.

On the 6th of April, Taylor had mounted a battery of eighteen pounders, which, in his own words, "were brought to bear upon the public square of Matamoras, and within good range for demolishing the town." And two weeks after this, an officer in our army wrote as follows: "Camp, opposite Matamoras, April 19, 1846. Our situation here is an extraordinary one. *Right in the enemy's country*, actually occupying their corn and cotton fields, *the people of the soil leaving their homes*, and we, with a small handful of men, marching with colors flying and drums beating, right under the very guns of one of their principal cities, — displaying the star-spangled banner, *as if in defiance, under their very nose*, — and they, with an army twice our size at least, sit quietly down, and make not the least resistance — *not the first effort to drive the invaders off*. There is no parallel to it." Truly there is no parallel to it. For the army of the United States was then encamped on territory which no one can deny was doubtful territory; for if Texas had once made a claim to it, Mexico claimed it too. It does not matter whether the boundary claimed by Texas extended to the Rio Grande or not. Was it right for our government to advance an army *for the purpose of occupation*,

upon this disputed ground, while the question of boundary was unsettled? Never would it have dared thus to send an army into the disputed territory of Maine, for this would assuredly have been a cause of war with England. And, moreover, Texas was annexed with no fixed boundaries; for the joint resolution expressly provides, "that said State shall be formed, subject to the *adjustment of all questions of boundary* that may arise with other governments." And for more than a hundred years had Mexico possessed settlements on both banks of the river. Her Custom-houses had never been interfered with by the Texans, and in the upper portion of this valley there were villages of thousands of inhabitants, who had never seen a Texan officer exacting any kind of submission or respect. The army of the United States was encamped on that soil, which to incorporate into the Union as a part of Texas, Mr. Benton had declared "would be an act of *direct aggression upon Mexico*, for all the consequences of which the United States would stand responsible." What could have been expected but collision and bloodshed?

On the 26th of April, a party of dragoons attacked a superior force of the enemy, and after losing sixteen men, were compelled to surrender. This may be considered as the actual commencement of the war. On receiving news of this event, the President sent a message to Congress, recommending the appropriation of men and money for the war; and by an almost unanimous vote, Congress passed such a bill, with the assertion in its preamble, that "war existed by the act of Mexico." This is the beginning of that series of events, which, at an incredible waste of lives and of money, has placed the American army in the capital of Mexico.

In reading impartially this page of history, the impression is forced upon the mind, that a singular spirit of blindness and perverse obtuseness, seems to have possessed the minds of our rulers. They seem to have acted like men who were under the influence of some fatality, so that they could not see any way of escape, but *must* march on blindfold to the pit of slaughter.

And thus does all history open to us the retributive justice of an overruling Providence. It is in vain, when entered upon the career of evil, to say, "Thus far." "Sin must pluck on sin," unless there be a true repentance. He who would keep the rewards of sin, must sin yet farther; and the fatal, flitting light of corruption leads him onward to perdition. Mr. Calhoun, the master-spirit of annexation, thinks he could have avoided the war, satisfied with the spoils already earned for his favorite system. He thinks that "*if* the army had remained at Corpus Christi, there would have been no conflict."

But Providence knows no *ifs*. Onward must the mighty stream advance, and no cunning hand can stay its progress. With the cancer of slavery feeding upon our system, this war was inevitable. It must rush on until the awful voice of Jehovah thunders, "Thus far, — here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The North, with a fatal spirit of acquiescence, has submitted to one encroachment after another upon the spirit of freedom; and now, floated upon the surface, it is borne along to share the retribution. There remains but one way of escape. Slavery, that hydra, which but gains in strength from every act of feeble opposition and tame submission, must be slain. It is smitten of God with madness; it rushes on with fatal



blindness and increasing folly. And yet we are all foolishly slumbering. At every new victory of the accursed system, some feeble cry is raised, "that this encroaching evil must be opposed henceforth," and then all is still. The Representatives from the North, to save some little remnant of self-respect, at the last moment when resistance is of no avail, utter a feeble, "don't," "we warn you ;" then, when all is over, and the evil is consummated, join in the exulting shout, and toast "our country, howsoever bounded." A war in its defence, however iniquitous, a measure however wrong, has but to be entered upon, and then they pronounce it right to aid in its completion. The assembled wisdom of the nation, for a party purpose, vote what they know to be a solemn lie. Governors, falling into the current, exhort the peaceful citizens to go forth and fight this battle of slavery, appeal to their patriotism, and lend their official influence to sanction the deeds of blood. The ghosts of men who were killed politically, because they dared to contend for what they considered right, haunt the miserable sleep of our modern statesmen ; and so they dare not move, or cry, or let their voice be heard in street or council. And thus stooping to a false and corrupting popular standard, crouching with fear, they huzza for the glories of our country ; lend their aid to furnish supplies of men and money ; give their children to pass through the fire of the false God of War ; join in the exulting shout of victory ; praise the success of our glorious armies, and lament that they are too old to join in the noble work of slaying Mexicans.

There is nothing more sorrowful, revealed by this present war, than the corrupt state of public opinion

in regard to right. Everywhere is exhibited the lowest standard of moral sentiment. Mere party expediency is unblushingly defended as the highest rule of action. Every party is seeking to make the most for party, out of the sufferings of Mexico, and the disgraces of our country. Advocates of a Tariff make no opposition to the war, because by a public debt, the Tariff is secured. Parties strive to avail themselves of the false renown of some military Leader. In catering to a false opinion, men whose age, experience, and exalted station should raise them above the sentiment, speak of "the glory which heroic deeds, and unsurpassed valor can acquire." R. C. Winthrop says, "our arms have gone on gloriously." Mr. Clay speaks of "the long series of glorious triumphs." Whig mass meetings resolve, "that as Whigs and American citizens, we rejoice in the signal triumph of our arms in Mexico." And even the venerable Mr. Gallatin speaks of "splendid successes, and the glory of these military deeds." With a strange want of moral discrimination, or a subtle pliancy to a low state of moral feeling, which cannot be right, he says that "no men are more worthy of admiration, better entitled to the thanks of their country, than those who after war has once taken place, brave death and stake their own lives in the conflict against the actual enemy."

These are the admissions, and these the approvals which cause a false halo to remain about war and warriors. To admit that *glory* can belong to men who volunteered in such a cause as this! Who that rightly views it, can for one moment thus admit? What is this war, even taking as real and indisputable the causes which are alleged in the attempt to justify it?

It is a war waged by a strong and vigorous nation, with all the choicest means of destruction that money, science, and intellect can command, against a feeble and distracted people, torn by internal conflict ; a helpless sister republic, with no friend or ally ; a mixed and half barbarous people, without money, credit, or moral strength.

It is a war of the strong against the weak. It is a war waged for money, revenge, and *satisfaction*.

In the enjoyment of a boundless prosperity, at peace with all the world, with uncounted millions of unoccupied acres, with every motive of position and honor, of love to man, and duty to the cause of freedom and human rights to protect and aid, to bless and strengthen, we stand before the world as the conquerors of a weak and unprotected neighbor.

By a long series of wrongs, we have alienated her affections, until at last our very name has become the nucleus of hatred ; and opposition to us, is the only tie that can unite her divided people.

We are engaged in a war in which nothing can be gained, and every thing prized may be lost.

We are spending hundreds of millions to get a paltry five.

We are refusing peace, because Mexico will not surrender territory which we do not want, and which if we obtain, will be the object of contention and intestine discord.

We are laying on blows merely for the sake of causing the prostrate foe to cry, "hold, enough."

The nature of our present position could be distinctly seen, if we would dismiss the indefinite idea of nations, and look at the contest, as between two indi-

viduals with human form corresponding with their state.

Look at one with stalwart arm, and with the best weapons. Every advantage is his of quick eye, strong limb, and the protection which skill in training and all the science of defence and attack can give. Beneath him lies his prostrate foe, an imbecile though stubborn cripple, subject to dizziness, withered in the arm, and partly blind. He has been prostrated by the vigorous blows of his antagonist, who now with foot upon his breast, commands him to sue for peace. He will not confess that he is conquered.

"Consent that I shall take from you all I wish, and I will let you go," cries out the strong man.

"Never will I consent," says the other.

Then the strong man proceeds to lop off a limb, and again cries out, "consent."

"Never," is the answer.

"Then," he exclaims, "I shall proceed to attack your *vital parts*, and by slow degrees, shall exhaust your life."

"Well, be it so, extinction is better than dishonor."

The glory to be acquired in such a contest, is the glory of our arms in this present war. And it is a strange hallucination which speaks of *splendid* successes, *glorious* triumphs. All the terms to characterize its nature, should be drawn from the cock-pit and the butcher's shambles. If this were done by those parents who read to their little ones the accounts of battles; by those who profess to be Christian editors and conservators of the public morals; if the volunteer soldier were regarded as a wilful murderer, the foe to virtue, peace and righteousness, and so the foe to his country, instead of its friend; if the



successful warrior were spoken of with pity, as deserving tears and prayers, not shouts and praises; if we could still associate with the person of the soldier his trade of human butcher, and look at the blood as it stains his garments, and keep in our nostrils the scent of human gore; no longer should we speak of "splendid successes," or of "troops covered with immortal glory."

If there is any glory in this present war, we must give it to the defeated, broken Mexican. When the position of that Republic was that of one "despoiled, outraged, and contemned," her persistent firmness deserves our praise. She could not be brought to treat for peace, while a threatening hand was extended over her. And when at last she did consent, when opposing factions had weakened her arm, with her army scattered, her treasury empty, her means exhausted, and her most important cities in the enemy's power; when every star of hope had sunk from the firmament, her noble refusal to give up the provinces which claimed still her protection, deserves to receive its meed of glory. It is a flash of light which reveals an unconquerable spirit, and is worthy of better days, and shall be blessed with better days. Her answer to our demand of New Mexico was this: "The government cannot consent to cede New Mexico, whose inhabitants have manifested their desire to make a part of the Mexican family, with more enthusiasm than any other part of the Republic. These meritorious Mexicans, abandoned to their fate during some administrations, often without protection even to preserve them from the incursions of the savages, have been the most truly patriotic of Mexicans, because,

forgetting their domestic complaints, they have remembered nothing but their desire to be of the Mexican family ; and many, exposing and sacrificing themselves to the vengeance of the invaders, have rebelled against them ; and when their plans were discovered or disconcerted, and their conspiracies frustrated, have again conspired. And would any government sell such Mexicans as a herd of cattle ? Never ! Let the nationality of the rest of the Republic perish for them ! Let us perish together ! ”

Yes, this is the spirit, and these are the people, contending for their homes and national existence, about whom glory dwells, rather than with those who would force them to submit to a foreign rule. Glory ! no glory crowns our country's brow these many years. Once she stood before the world with the broad banner floating to the breeze, on which was inscribed the glorious motto, “ All men are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The prize was won, after reddening many a field with the best blood of beating, human hearts. And then — ay, what then ?

These men, strong in the battle for freedom, calling upon the Lord of hosts ; these men, brave, prudent, honored, form a compact to rivet yet stronger the fetters of the slave ; binding all, even the sons of New England, those who shall tread her free mountains, bathing their summits in God's free air ; those who should till her fields, and breathe her atmosphere ; binding them all by solemn oath and perpetual contract, to spend their blood and treasure, should there come the need, in perpetuating a system full of wickedness, black as the open throat of hell itself.

This is the glory which this war heaps up. It bears inscribed upon its banner, "The extension of human slavery."

Look at it! With a country abounding in every natural resource, with men and money, with every improvement in art, with all the appliances of science, industry, and skill, how do we use them?

To win the nations to the love of freedom? To protect the weak, and aid the suffering? To advance the happiness and comfort of our race, or even to spread the peaceful pursuits of commerce? To aid industry, and bring together distant regions?

Oh, no, this is not our glory.

With untold millions of acres, — now desolate in their solitude, or roamed over by the wild beast of the desert, — sending up to the noon-day sun and the open firmament of Heaven their pleading voice for the hand of man to be laid upon their bosom, that they may give back to him the blessings of sun, and dew, and rain, and the fertilizing influences of the lapse of ages; with these belonging to us, there are across the water — yes, in our homes, our streets, our cities, thousands upon ten-thousands, listless, starving, dying, who would rejoice with joy unspeakable, to possess and till these fair and fertile acres.

Oh, glorious nation, which sells these broad lands to the speculator, and expends the money in war!

Glorious nation, which gives 160 acres as a bounty for murder, and cannot give one rod to him who is dying for work!

Glorious government! which can spend millions, with all the appliances of skill and science; the energies of aspiring youth and noble manhood; all the wealth of a mighty nation for years to come, — to

subdue a weak, divided, miserable country, while a deaf ear is turned to a whole people of noble-hearted workmen dying for bread. "No money can be given for help, because the money is needed for the war!" No money for charity, none for justice, none for the payment of claims long due to our own citizens, none for internal commerce, for science, for the promotion of the means of human comfort; all must be taken to pay the hirelings in this war of slavery! Such is the glory that encircles our nation's brow!

And how can the man of discerning intellect and sound moral perception, use the words *splendor*, *glory*, *immortality*, in connexion with a cause such as this? It is the *cause* that consecrates or curses; that crowns with the chaplet of a true renown, or brands with a fiery mark of Hell.

For deeds of individual daring, you have but to go to every painted, howling, and demoniac savage tribe. And what, like the Pirate's deck, has exhibited a fierce, unflinching courage, when the banded crew fought for money and the lust of blood? A furious zeal excites every breast, and death is welcomed with a thoughtless joy.

For thousands of years, in every clime, and under every sky, glory has been sought in deeds of blood; and to seek it thus to-day, in contest with an inferior foe, is cheap, and mean, and dastard, to the extreme.

Yet what have we heard? Not the voice of praise from one, but a universal chorus of exultation. Professed Ministers of the meek and peaceful Jesus, thanking the merciful Creator, that the national feeling of 'love of victory,' had been so abundantly gratified; professed Christian Newspapers, spreading forth the sickening detail of wholesale, scientific mur-



der, with fulsome epithets of praise ; grave Legislators, — Whigs and Democrats, — those who denounce and those who defend the war, vieing with each other in votes of thanks to their marauding, blood-stained countrymen. Every day in the journals that go into every corner, penetrate into every house, and fall under the eye of young and old, woman and man, wise and foolish, are to be seen the words of praise, the expressions of joyful admiration, the epithets that belong to deeds beloved of God, and worthy of his obedient children.

In one column is seen the war denounced ; in another, its voluntary prosecutors, its willing instruments, hired for a few cents per day or a shining epaulet, to kill and be killed, are praised and glorified.

The war is wrong, but they who wage its battles are right. The cause is infamous ; the men who love the cause, are heroes.

The deeds are accursed, and their end is evil ; but the willing doers of the mighty wrongs, are worthy of eternal memory.

Such is the low standard of moral estimate, the utter want of manly, christian principle, exhibited by the progress of the present war.

Another fact, worthy of notice in this connexion, is the spirit of apathy and indifference which prevails among us all, even those who are opposed to the war, both in its cause, origin and prosecution. It is worthy of our especial wonder.

And yet why should we wonder at this, when a greater wrong, and of which this is one incidental and ultimate consequence, has for many years been borne so patiently, and has failed to enlist such an earnest opposition, as to heave it from its base ?

We have seen the iniquitous system of Slavery, which at the end of the last century had become so unprofitable, that the advocates of emancipation were many and powerful, by the impulse of a foreign market for its products, grown to a gigantic size, lord it over all our government, dictate the policy of the country, trample upon that Constitution by which alone its power is upheld, stand forth unblushingly and claim homage from us all, and an equal right with that which is good of protection and extension. We have seen this system leading to the violation of treaties, the appropriation of territory claimed by a sister Republic, and plunging at last our nation into a war of conquest.

We have seen, for eighteen months, the work of mutilation, crime and death go on, each advancing step sunk deeper in human gore. By every mail has come some new deed of violence. Cities have been attacked, and the cry of helpless women and children has risen, amid the shrieks and agony of death and dishonor. The living have gone forth, and dead corpses encased in lead have returned. Thousands of widows and orphans have sent up to the heavens their pitiful wail. Blood and treasure have been poured forth as water. Continually has been the cry, more living to replace the dead; more silver and gold, to spend in the work of conquest; more means to penetrate into "the enemy's vital parts."

And yet all is quiet as under the most perfect despotism. There is no united appeal, which should make the rulers tremble; no thronging voices of petition, no indignant rebuke, no prayer, "Lord, how long." All is still, as though a polluted crust of selfishness, hard and icy, had bound down all the gener-

ous, noble instincts of the human heart. All is still, as if Napoleon were our Emperor, and files of 'Imperial Guards,' with bayonets fixed, were ranged before our doors. Oh, for some Peter the Hermit, to kindle the fires of enthusiasm! to traverse this land, to suffer even the pains of martyrdom, to rouse us from this heavy sleep!

There would seem to be no hope of our awakening, if the developments now taking place, fail to stir us.

The evidence is clear, in the face of all denial, that this, from the first, has been a war of conquest. No conditions of peace have been offered, except coupled with the demand of surrender of Territory. This is shown to be the meaning of the favorite phrase, "conquering a peace." Fight until the enemy *gives up the Territory* we demand; beat him until he *accepts our conditions*, is the unmanly stand that has from the first been taken.

*Get possession of the enemy's territory and keep it*, has been the soul of every instruction.

When Commodore Sloat was sent to the Pacific, only two months after the war had commenced, his instructions were, to obtain speedy possession of California; so that in the event of peace being made on the basis of actual possession, we should be found in actual possession of California. Thus is disclosed the fact, that no sooner had the war begun, than the scheme was laid of acquiring Territory.

The instructions say, and with an entire unconsciousness of the latent baseness, "The object of the United States, is, under its rights as a belligerent nation, to possess itself entirely of Upper California. The object of the United States has reference to ultimate peace with Mexico; and if *at the peace*, the basis

of the *uti possidetis* shall be established, the Government expects, through your forces, to be found in actual possession of Upper California."

This policy of conquest, at first denied, though secretly acted upon, and the desire of which has continually and progressively increased, with the success of our armies, is now openly proclaimed in the last Message of the President. He says, "I cannot doubt that we should secure and render available the conquests which we have already made; and that with this view, we should hold and occupy, by our naval and military forces, all the ports, towns, cities and provinces, now in our occupation, or which *may fall hereafter* into our possession."

In accordance with this policy are the resolutions introduced by Mr. Dickinson in the Senate, which begin thus: "Resolved, that true policy requires the Government of the United States to strengthen its political and commercial relations upon this continent by the annexation of such contiguous territory as may conduce to that end, and may be justly obtained."

And everything now coming from the seat of government, shows that the schemes of ambition, grown huge by the conquests it has fed upon, look now with disdain upon single provinces, and contemplate the entire subjugation of Mexico as a province, or its absorption as a territory by the United States.

Even Mr. Calhoun, who has heretofore shown no lack of love for increased dominion, is alarmed and seeks to fall back: He little knew the spirit he was rousing. He little knew that for the safety of our institutions, the spirit of foreign conquest ought long ago to have been checked.



But Dr. Channing wrote years ago, "Did this country know itself, or were it disposed to profit by self-knowledge, it would feel the necessity of laying an immediate curb on its passion for extended territory. It would not trust itself to new acquisitions. It would shrink from the temptation to conquest. We are a restless people, prone to encroachment, impatient of the ordinary laws of progress; less anxious to consolidate and perfect, than to extend our institutions; more ambitious of spreading ourselves over a wide space, than of diffusing beauty and fruitfulness over a narrower field. Possessed of a domain, vast enough for the growth of ages, it is time for us to stop in the career of acquisition and conquest. Already endangered by our greatness, we cannot advance without imminent peril to our institutions, union, prosperity, virtue, and peace." The truth of these words, even Calhoun seems ready now to acknowledge. He has found himself far out-run, and now, spent in breath, he pants and flutters with exhaustion. Too late does he see the danger which he has been one of the most fool-hardy in provoking. He has aroused spirits of the vasty deep, spirits of fire, earth and hell, which words cannot now allay or beat back.

And yet we are all indifferent! We feel as if we had little concern in these events, big with our own fate, and the fate of our children.

The open avowal of the rulers of this mighty nation, to push on their conquests even to the utter annihilation of the foe, if that foe does not yield to a conqueror's terms, awakens no deep voice of remonstrance from the nation's heart; falls upon dull, cold ears.

Truly do we seem almost to have entered into that fearful state, when our eyes are blinded and our ears are stopped, lest at any time, we *should* see with our eyes and hear with our ears, turn from our evil courses, and so escape the deserved judgments of the God of universal justice.

If this indifference could have been reached by the appeals of principle, it would seem as if long since it would have been disturbed. If this nation had a conscience, that conscience could not but have been moved. If it had a soul of honor, it could not but have prostrated itself in shame to the dust.

But principle, honor, conscience, seem dead, and men quietly sneer at their appeal. No glow of virtuous enthusiasm warms the general soul, no pulse of right beats in the universal heart.

Therefore, according to the laws of God's Providence, by which those influences successively proceed, adapted to the state of a nation, we are now entering into that phase of external and material evils, in which every violation of the law of love and right must ultimate and complete itself.

We are beginning to witness the effects ; a degraded moral sentiment, a lust of power, a devotion to mere party good, a generation trained in the atmosphere of carnage and military glory ; a standing army large as the despots of Europe ; a flow of specie to a foreign land ; an increasing public debt ; the consolidation of power in the hands of the Executive ; the exaltation of warlike chiefs to places of civil power, and political partisans to military rank ; the decline of public credit ; the difficulties of financial embarrassment ; the imposition of taxes ; an increased frontier to protect from savage inroads ; and the seemingly inevitable

necessity of furthering the extension of human slavery.

The false and foolish idea that slavery is or ever has been profitable to the North, seems about to be met by the Providence of God, revealing in loss and disgrace, in far spreading ruin and failure, that a violation of nature's law of justice, must suffer its just reward.

It is thus permitted that the success of evil shall be its punishment. And instead of triumphing, could we see aright, we might, as true patriots, rather be called upon to mourn, at every victory that has been won upon a foreign soil.

We are but just entering upon that state of retribution, which is not arbitrarily induced, but advances step by step, through the instrumentality of blinded and willing agents. One yawning gulf after another opens before, so gradually, so imperceptibly, that the rash and thoughtless know their danger, only when danger has become a dreadful reality. The prophet is not listened to. He whom I have before quoted, said with a warning foresight, "If by our advances we put the colonies of England in new peril, with what face can we oppose her occupation of Cuba? Suppose her, with that magnificent island in her hands, to command the Mexican Gulf and the mouths of the Mississippi; will the Western States find compensation for this formidable neighborhood, in the privilege of flooding Texas with slaves?"

There is here a subject of fearful import. It acquires an aspect of reality when we consider our present condition. Those "straws which show which way the wind blows," may be seen floating by in the air. Already is there talk of the *power of England in*

*the Gulf*, which is to be made a lever for action, in the same manner as in the annexation of Texas. An article in a leading New York paper, not long ago, may give us food for reflection in connexion with this. The writer says: "We express a settled conviction, when we say that, excited as the military spirit of this country is by the war with Mexico, and confident in the prowess of her arms, a war with England in a purely national quarrel, would be welcomed by all the stirring blood of the Republic, and that a call for volunteers in such a war, would bring into the field such a host as has never before been marshalled under the American banner; eager for the combat with foemen worthy of their steel, and on fields where pestilence and climate wage not their unequal, obscure, but fatal warfare. Looking then as we do with certain assurance upon the near probability of a war with England, we are most unwilling to see her acquiring such a foothold in the Gulf of Mexico as the possession of Cuba would give her. And we have the most entire conviction, that any attempt on her part to acquire that colony, would furnish the clearly national ground of quarrel, which would unite the people of the United States in opposition to her project."

Now, with the existence of slavery in our country as a controlling power; with a standing army, a military spirit among the nation, and an ambitious demagogue to play upon the passions of the people; with the false notions of patriotism that now prevail; with the doctrine that once engaged in a war, no matter for what cause, or how brought about, every lover of his country must aid the Executive in prosecuting it to the end, according to his direction, — a war, with some



of the old nations of the world, is as certain as the law of gravitation in the physical universe. But in whatever form retribution comes, whether war with England, or among ourselves, it matters not ; sufficient that it *has* always come, and *must* come continually, if there is a God. We do not believe this, till it comes upon us, but this does not alter the facts.

Who, ten years ago, would have believed what is now *the fact*? Who would not have said to him who should have declared the history, word for word, event for event, vote for vote, and battle for battle — who would not have said, “What, is this nation a dog? It cannot so soon become corrupted by the false maxims of despotic governments; it cannot so render itself the reproach of the humanity and true civilization of the world.”

But so it is. In this age of improvement, and of lofty ideas, when everything seemed looking to the blessings of peace and a higher civilization; when lovers of their race were seeking how they might break down the barriers of national antipathy, and spread the blessings of peace, and cement the bonds of a universal brotherhood; when the principles of cöoperation and love were beginning to obtain a place in the hearts of the rising generation; when Christianity, in its practical truths seemed about to descend into the lives of men, and shed abroad its healing and ennobling influences, we find ourselves engaged in a foreign war, the end of which no one can discern.

Its consequences, now beginning to be felt, will cast a long shadow upon our future, even if peace were now established. Its burdens must fall eventually on the people, the toiling husbandman, the laborers for wages, the mechanic, the artisan, those who work for

their daily bread, and earn that bread by the sweat of manly brows, and the weariness of female hands; upon these must fall, at last, the heavy burden. Out of the free labor of the North must come the means to pay these heavy debts. Hand and foot are we bound to serve our masters, unless the soul of freedom once more comes to dwell among us, and her angel wings fan us, and wake us from our drowsy sleep.

A traditionary freedom will not save us. It will not do to praise our Fathers and build their sepulchres. Worse for us that we have such an inheritance, if we spend it foolishly, and are unable to appreciate its worth. Sad for us, if having served as the *scaffolding* only to the glorious temple of universal freedom, we should be at last pulled down. Sad, if the Genius of a true humanity, beholding us with tearful eyes from the mount of vision, shall fold his wings in sorrowing pity, and repeat the strain, "Oh land of Washington, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

But a moral deformity yet more hideous, is revealed to us in this war. Not only do we see indifference, and a wrong estimate of greatness, but a positive assertion of principles subversive of every principle of righteousness, and indicating that lowest stage of degradation, that degree of spiritual blindness, which, groping about in the light of noon-day, sees not; and walking boldly in the darkness of midnight, lighted by an internal fire of selfish lust, claims to see. This war has been defended, and is upheld by many, on the ground of Anglo-Saxon superiority,

and the "extending of the area of freedom." It is our destiny it is said — so it has always been, and so must it be — that the stronger shall overpower the weaker, and the cause of humanity must progress, if need be, through bloodshed and ruin, through the destruction of that which "is ready to perish;" and it is the plan of Providence that the blood of the strong and young shall be infused into the old and weak, and thus shall advance the cause of Human Progress.

I need not remind you, that when the fiat of the Southern Slaveholders, who have controlled the destinies of this country, went forth that Texas should be annexed, many of our Northern Politicians, who had hitherto opposed this measure, dropped all their opposition, and were found shouting among the loudest, for the "lone star of freedom." They made a virtue of a pressing necessity, and while the leading advocate at the South was upholding the measure in the eyes of the world as absolutely needful for the preservation of "peculiar domestic institutions," his followers at the North were putting forth this plea of "extending the area of freedom." And under this mantle, the attempt is made to hide the evil of this war, following as a necessary consequence of the first "extension of the area."

How can we characterize aright such a fatal blindness to all the principles of right and justice! How cause the light to shine into that eye which has reached this stage of total blindness! How argue, when the shallowest of sophistry suffices to justify the worst of crimes!

It is a glorious thought that the all-merciful Creator overrules for good the sins and errors of his creatures, and in his all-embracing love, makes the

very wrath of man to minister to his praise. Glorious vision, to look back upon the wrecks of ambition, passion, crime, and folly, and behold over them all, and through them all, advancing the cause of humanity and love. Inspiring hope, to look forward into the future, and rejoice that in spite of all that wickedness and injustice can do, — the intrigues of the selfish, the corrupt ambition of the demagogue, the pliancy of the thoughtless, and the stubbornness of the self-willed, — in spite of all, truth and justice and love shall triumph, because these are of God, and the kingdom of God shall come !

But, voluntarily to make use of war and slavery as instruments for good, to band men together for slaughter, to join in the exulting shout as ranks of brothers are mowed down in heaps, to “let loose the dogs of war,” to awaken the lust of conquest, to set at nought the commands of God and the common bonds of simple morality, to supply the means of destruction and of death, to look approvingly upon the mighty iniquities of a conquering foe, and urge on the instruments of vengeance and of blood — to do all this in the name of Freedom and of God, leaves no deeper gulf in the abyss of Evil ! Is it then come to this, that “might *does* make right ?” Go thou who makest thus thy infamous plea, and join the conquering hosts of Roman valor. Join the despoilers of Poland, and the armies of Nicholas in the mountains of Circassia. Yea, go to the deck of the Brazilian slave-ship, manned by American sailors, and tear from his country, the poor, degraded Congo, that he may be nursed in the bosom of modern Civilization, and be raised in the scale of humanity. The law will call you Pirate ! But what of that ? Say to the rose-water



moralist and soft-hearted philanthropist, that you are on the crusade of freedom and righteousness, and let the cap of liberty be borne aloft before you, and hear the angelic host raising the exulting anthem, Glory to God! Ay, go to the mount of Calvary, and take thy place, not with the weeping women, who look up with tearful eyes, and mourn the death of the Son of God; not with his fainting disciples, who far off mourn their master's loss; but join the crowd who wag their head in triumph, and offer the last piercing spear, because, through His death, in the blessed Providence of God, shall come the salvation of a world!

He who with claim of far-seeing statesmanship or exaltation above vulgar estimate, defends this war on the ground of the good that will redound to the cause of human progress, would consistently be found among the murderers of the Prince of Peace. There is no crime or wrong in the whole catalogue of iniquities, which might not thus be justified. The old man who can no longer use or enjoy his wealth is not safe, because if he is removed, the plans of Providence to diffuse his riches, will then be answered; and so it is right to murder him. How much more worthy of the Statesman of this age, the motto, "No political change is worth being purchased by a single drop of human blood!" The philosophy of carnage and of the battle-field, is rude and worthy of the restless age of boyhood of the human race! In that school, Alexander, Cæsar, were as wise as we are, and "the Man of Destiny" should be our Messiah! We must turn back the tide of God's advancing flood of truth, erase the long list of peaceful, godlike heroes, and, to take a broad *philosophical* view, go to the means and instruments of the New Zealand savage,



gifted with the light of modern science in strategy and engineering! Deeper is the response from every heart to the words of the poet:

———"the road the human being travels,  
That, on which BLESSING comes and goes, doth follow  
The river's course, the valley's playful windings,  
Curves round the corn-field and the hill of vines,  
Honoring the holy bounds of property!

There exists  
A higher than the warrior's excellence.  
The vast and sudden deeds of violence,  
Adventures wild and wonders of the moment,  
These are not they that generate the Calm,  
The Blissful, and the enduring Mighty."

To strike, to fight, to progress by prowess of the hand and arm, are but external means, the relic of that beastly nature which we leave behind, as we ascend the heights of wisdom and of love, in which alone true power resides. It is but shallow vision to see in these means the substance. It is but shallow to overlook the mightier energies that belong to industry, to the power of up-building labor, of peaceful efforts for the good of man. War is but a vulgar instrument of destruction, and constructs nothing that shall last for the good of the race. War can subdue men, so that they shall remain while force is over them, the slaves of fear; but never yet made a cöoperative friend in him whom it attacked.

Who, with the opening career revealed to this age, of discoveries in the realm of nature,—in the heavens above and the earth beneath,—the wonders of interchange of thought and the conquest over space and time, and the rude elements which annoy the savage; the increased means of blessing through all the outbranching streams of social life; the new avenues open to ambition, the restless explorer, and the

busy planner ; — who, with this vision, denied to the dwellers of an earlier age, could have looked for a return to the worn-out maxims of godless politicians, and the renewed employment of a shallow means of action, carried out in complete perfection, only among the more degenerate races of mankind ?

It is indeed strange, and the blindness itself seems but a part of that retribution, which continually attends all human deeds. That is the last stage, which defends itself and will not see its evil, but glories in its shame ; which doeth evil, on the plea that good may come.

“But good will come out of it, will there not ?”  
Undoubtedly.

“Nevertheless, O sinner, harden not thine heart in evil ;  
Nor plume thee in imaginary triumph, because thou art not valueless as vile ;  
Because thy dark abominations add lustre to the Clarity of Light ;  
Because a wonder-working alchemy draineth elixir out of poisons ;  
Because the same fiery volcano that scorcheth and ravageth a continent,  
Hath in the broad blue bay cast up some petty island ;  
For sin is still sin ; a blot on the glory of creation,  
Which justice must wipe out.  
Sin is a loathsome leprosy, fretting the white robes of innocence ;  
A rottenness, eating out the heart of the royal cedars of Lebanon ;  
A rent in the sacred veil, whereby God left his temple ;  
Therefore, consider thyself, thou that dost not sorrow for thy guilt.”

Let us take heed, my friends, that this current of evil shall not quietly sweep us along, without the noblest of all resistances, the resistance of moral strength. If there is not virtue in using every nerve against this war, and against its originating cause — human slavery — in this professedly free and enlightened country, then in vain have been all the lessons of the past. In vain is our talk of the age of light and progress, and “the good time coming.” In vain is our hope of a purer state of love, our anticipation of the reign of Christ’s kingdom of peace and good-will.

In vain are our dreams of a better age, our vision of a free and happy country, where knowledge and art, where science and religion, where poetry and beauty shall abide and bless. They are all in vain, mere mists which the burning sun shall soon cause to disappear; and most foolish and miserable of all men, are they who thus hope, and pray and labor.

SD 12











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